Safe Boating and Fishing

Safety in boats is based on your knowledge, experience and what you can learn.

Those who are new to boating and those who have hours of boating experience can always improve their boating

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Boating at a nearby river, lake or ocean is a great way to relax after a hectic week.

Unfortunately, however, approximately 800 people die in boating-related accidents each year. About half of the deaths involve alcohol. And, nearly nine

Safe Boating and Fishing

- **Remember, as a beginner, never go boating on your own. Once you have decided what you want to do with your boat and how you want to use it, talk to others who can help you to choose the best boat for your boating purpose.**

Then begin by practicing your new boating skills in calm, protected waters before trying more difficult

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- **Once on the water, keep a good lookout for others on, in and under the water.**
- **Know the speed limits that apply to your craft at which you can manage safely on the water.**
- **Most important of all know the Rules of the Road**

at Sea. These rules are designed to help you decide immediately what action to take. When something goes wrong you must act quickly, positively and correctly. Then you will continue to keep

Boating

If small boat enthusiasts observe the following rules, they will be nautical miles ahead in personal fun and safety.

1. Know your boat - what it can and can’t do.

2. Don’t overload – check the boat manufacturer’s capacity plate.

3. Keep a good lookout and situational awareness of other boats and objects.

4. Operate at safe and legal speeds - watch your wake.

5. Know and respect the weather - heed weather warnings.

Boating

6. Take sufficient fuel - in proper containers - know your cruising radius.

7. Keep your boat shipshape, check safety equipment.

8. Take necessary equipment fire extinguishers, personal flotation devices, fuel, etc.

9. Secure the boat properly stow loose objects.

10. Learn boating laws and obey them.

11. Never operate a boat while intoxicated.

Boating

12. Get a list of recommended safety equipment from the Coast Guard and make sure all items are on board and in working condition. You and all you passengers should have a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) that fits properly.

13. Leave your itinerary with someone. Tell them who you will be with, how long you will be gone, and where you plan to go.

14. Know the rules and regulations of the area you will be navigating.

Boating

15. Fill tanks 90-92 percent full to allow for expansion. Close hatches and opening before fueling. Turn off electrical heat and appliances. NO SMOKING while fueling.

16. Capsizing occurs on small boats because of sudden weight shifts. Move carefully.

17. Give swimmers, skiers and divers plenty of distance.

18. Stay alert, keep your eyes open and empty many of the same defensive measures you use behind the wheel of a car.

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- **Research has shown that as little as four hours' exposure to sun, wind, glare, vibration, and other motion on the water produces "boater's hypnosis," a kind of fatigue that slows reaction time almost as much as if a person were drunk.**

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According to a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) study, it takes only a third as much alcohol to impair a boater's balance, judgment and coordination in comparison to drivers of vehicles on land.

Having two beers on the water can impair your abilities as much as drinking a six-pack at a backyard barbecue.

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Fifty-one percent of the people who died in boating crashes had a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .04 % or more. A blood alcohol of .10% or more was found in 30 % of the fatalities.

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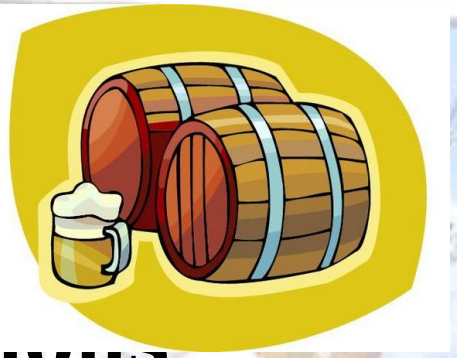
Alcohol can affect judgment, motor skills, peripheral vision, depth perception, night vision, and balance. A "tipsy" person on an unstable, moving platform like a boat runs the risk of slipping on deck, stumbling down a gangway, lurching and shifting suddenly in the boat, pushing people overboard, or falling overboard themselves.

In the event of a fall overboard, alcohol may increase risk of cardiac arrest and will certainly reduce the body's ability to stay warm in cold water.

Safe Boating and Fishing

One in four drowning deaths are caused from people falling out of the boat.



It is well-established that with t… first drink, brain functions are depressed. That's why boaters should think *before* they drink.

Before you take your boat out of dry dock, remember that safe boating starts before you first set out on the water. Do not wait until a crash to educate yourself and your passengers on the rules of safe boating. Alcohol use isn't the sport. Boating is the

Safe Boating and Skiing

Water-skiing is an exciting and challenging sport. However, like all "fast-action" sports that are fun, it does possess an element of risk. Many skiers and boaters are not aware of the potential hazards of water-skiing and as a result, are hurt or even killed

pursuing this recreational sport. Attention to hazards in the area where you are skiing is especially critical due to the ever growing number

Safe Boating and Skiing

The Ski Area

Each boat should be able to maintain a 200 foot wide "ski corridor" (100 feet on either side of the boat). The entire "skiing course" should be at least 2,000 - 3,000 feet long to avoid constant turning and risky maneuvering.

A minimum depth of five to six feet of obstacle-free water is suggested for safe skiing to:

Keep the skis from dragging bottom during starts.

Allow for a margin of safety against hitting bottom or submerged obstacles during a fall.

Safe Boating and Skiing

Serious injuries can result from hitting fixed objects such as docks, pilings or stumps. While many areas with obstacles are marked by warning buoys or signs, it is up to the boat operator, observer and skier to be alert to any potential hazards in the skiing area. Avoid solid objects when landing. Ski only in areas you are familiar with.

Consult charts of the area, ask other skiers who possess "local knowledge", and personally drive through the course before you actually

Safe Boating and Skiing

- As a rule, avoid skiing when the water is rough due to high winds. Choppy water demands a greater skill level and causes the skier to fatigue more quickly, often because the tow boat cannot maintain a constant speed.
- Skiing in the rain is not recommended because of the loss of visibility experienced by the boat operator.
- When skiing in cooler weather, be aware of the effects of hypothermia. Loss of body heat leads to a reduction in coordination and judgment. The use of wet suits can ward off the

Safe Boating and Skiing

Safety Tips For Water-Skiers

- **Don't take unnecessary risks while water-skiing. The following tips will help you safely enjoy this thrilling sport:**
- **ALWAYS have an observer in the boat. This is a legal requirement in many states. The boat driver cannot watch the skier and operate the boat safely at the same time.**
- **Never ski in rough water. High waves or a choppy sea will prevent the tow boat from maintaining a steady course and speed to say nothing of the impact on the skis themselves.**

Safe Boating and Skiing

Safety Tips For Water-Skiers

- **ALWAYS wear a Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) designed for water skiing. Ski belts are NOT recommended and in some cases are illegal to use in some states. Your approved PFD will help keep you afloat.**

- **Stay well clear of congested areas and obstructions. Water-skiing requires a lot of open area.**

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- **Don't spray or "buzz" swimmers, boats, or other skiers. Such stunts are dangerous, discourteous, and could cause an unintentional collision.**
- **NEVER water-ski while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Such activity is extremely dangerous because of the impairment to your judgment and ability to respond. A recent study conducted with expert skiers who were deliberately intoxicated indicated that even their ability to ski was dramatically reduced.**

Safe Boating and Skiing

- **Use hand signals between the skier and observer. Agree before you start what each signal means so there is no confusion at a critical moment.**

- **NEVER ski after dark. It is hazardous AND illegal. Any boat traveling fast enough to tow a skier is traveling too fast to navigate safely at night.**

Safe Boating and Fishing

For many people, fishing offers the perfect combination of sport and relaxation. According to the American Sportfishing Association, some 50 million U.S. anglers contribute more than $108 billion to the economy each year.

Careful casting is key to keeping hooks where they belong. Fly casters need up to 30 feet behind them, and bait casters also need clear side space, depending on whether they're right- or left-handed.

It's the caster's responsibility to make sure he or she has enough room to cast safely, but bystanders should also watch where others are casting.

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Problems can also arise when an angler's cast "catches" a nearby tree, bush or root. Many people will try to snap the hook free to avoid cutting the line and losing the hook. Unfortunately, that wild "snapback" motion might cause you to hook yourself or a friend.

There are several methods for removing imbedded hooks, all of which require an extra helping of common sense. If you have any doubts about attempting to remove it yourself, seek medical attention immediately.

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Some species of fish have spines that can cause havoc on the hands of an unprepared angler. Among the most common are catfish, bullhead and walleye.

All fish -- with or without spines -- can be harmful if eaten raw. The increasing popularity of seviche, a marinated raw fish recipe from Latin America, has left some anglers with intestinal parasites that can be difficult for doctors to identify and treat. Play it safe and always cook your catch thoroughly.

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Remember that fishing isn't only about catching fish. Many people fish for relaxation or just to be in the great outdoors. Fortunately, it's easy to protect nature and still have a great time. If the person before you littered, clean up the site yourself. Likewise, the next person to fish in "your" spot won't enjoy it as much if you littered. And don't pour liquids -- especially gasoline -- into any body of water.

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Have a heart when it comes to your caught fish, too. Handle the fish as little as possible. Don't squeeze its gill plate or abdomen because the internal organs are easily damaged. Also, realize that some species like trout are easily damaged because they have almost no scales.

Don’t use live bait if you're planning to release your catch. Fish tend to swallow those hooks, which can then lodge in their stomachs.

Safe Boating and Fishing

Finally, gentleness counts when releasing a fish back to the water. "If possible, remove the hook while the fish is still in water," says Thomas. "Gently cradle the fish upright in the water, gliding it back and forth to move water through its gills so it can breathe. When you see normal gill movement, open your hands gently so the fish can swim away." Showing respect for nature -- and the fish you catch -- is an important part of safe fishing.

Safe Boating and Fishing

A Checklist for Safe Fishing

Fishing license. Some states permit children under 16 to use an accompanying adult's license. Call your state's Department of Natural Resources.

Hook extractor, wire cutter or needle-nose pliers

Net -- so you don't have to lean over the wa

Hat, sunscreen and sunglasses

Personal flotation device

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A Checklist for Safe Fishing

Proper shoes or boots, especially if you're wading

First-aid kit, including adhesive bandage strips and disinfectant

Cellular phone for outgoing emergency calls

Radio -- so you can monitor weather reports

Drinking water

Safe Boating and Fishing